The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences of Alberta
in cooperation with The Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies
and The Department of Music
present from Prague, Czech Republic

In Concert

Felix Slováček, saxophone, clarinet

with

Boris Krajny, piano

Sunday, November 1, 2009 at 3:00 pm
Convocation Hall, Arts Building

Wirth Institute
FOR AUSTRIAN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Program

Concerto for Clarinet in E-Flat Major, "Darmstadt concerto" III. Rondo	Carl Stamitz (1745-1801)
Waltz in C Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2 (1847)	Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
Concerto for oboe in D minor. Adagio (early 1700s)	Alessandro Marcello (1669-1747)
Melody, Op. 3 (1852)	Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894)
Poem, Op. 41:14 (1891-1894)	Zdenek Fibich (1850-1900)
5 Stücke, No.5, Liebeswalzer (1896)	Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925)
Concerto for clarinet (1940)	Artie Shaw (1910-2004)

Intermission

A Little African (1909) The Girl with the Flaxen Hair (1912) A Gypsy Dance (1880)	Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Ritual Fire Dance, from "El amor Brujo" (1915)	Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)
Concerto for saxophone (1956)	Ronald Binge (1910-1979)
Bugatti step, for piano solo (1930)	Jaroslav Jezek (1906-1942)
Once upon a time in the West (1968) (C'era una volta il West)	Ennio Morricone (b. 1928)

Program Notes

Carl Philip Stamitz (1745–1801) is the best-known representative of the second generation of the Stamic family who were active in Mannheim during the 1750es. His father Jan Vaclav Stamic was born in 1717 in what is now known as Havlickuv Brod in the Czech Republic, but moved with his family to Mannheim in 1745 to become the Director of Instrumental Music and leader of the incomparable Mannheim court orchestra His son Carl Stamitz was a second violinist in the court orchestra, a position which enabled him to develop a brilliant performing technique as well as study the contemporary Mannheim repertoire. He left Mannheim in 1770, travelling widely to Paris, Vienna, Frankfurt, Augsburg, and Strasbourg. From 1777 until at least 1779 he lived in London, where he published many compositions, especially chamber works. In the mid -1790es, he served briefly as Kapellmeister and music teacher at the university in Mannheim. Stamitz works include more than 50 symphonies, close to 40 symphonies concertante, around 40 solo concertos and a huge amount of chamber music (more than 250 works), including works for wind-band.

Fryderyc Chopin (1810–1849) was born in a village near Warsaw, to a French-expatriate father and Polish mother and was regarded as a child-prodigy pianist. On 2 November 1830, at the age of twenty, he left Warsaw for Austria, intending to go on to Italy. The outbreak of the Polish November Uprising seven days later, and its subsequent suppression by Russia, led to Chopin becoming one of many expatriates of the Polish Great Emigration. In Paris, Chopin made a comfortable living as a composer and piano teacher, while giving few public performances. Chopin's compositions were written primarily for the piano as solo instrument. Though they are technically demanding, the emphasis in his style is on nuance and expressive depth. Chopin invented musical forms such as the instrumental ballade and was responsible for major innovations in the piano sonata, mazurka, waltz, nocturne, étude, impromptu and prélude. He endowed popular dance forms, such as the Polish *mazurek* and the Viennese waltz, with a greater range of melody and expression.

Alessandro Marcello (1669–1747) was an Italian nobleman and dilettante who excelled in various areas, including poetry, philosophy, mathematics and, perhaps most notably, music. After studies, Alessandro Marcello served the city of Venice as a diplomat in the Levant and the Peloponnese in 1700 and 1701. A slightly older contemporary of Antonio Vivaldi, Marcello held concerts at his hometown of Venice. Being a nobleman, he played and wrote music for pleasure alone. Alessandro Marcello's compositional output is small, consisting of not much more than a dozen each of chamber cantatas, violin sonatas, and concertos, as well as several arias and canzonets. Although his works are infrequently performed today, Marcello is regarded as a very competent composer. Of all of his works, the Adagio from the Oboe Concerto is most enduring, and has become a staple of wedding music collections.

Anton Grigorevich Rubinstein (1829–1894) was a Russian pianist, composer and conductor. As a pianist he was regarded as a rival of Franz Liszt, and he ranks amongst the great keyboard virtuosos. Rubinstein was born to Jewish parents but before he was 5 years old, all members of the Rubinstein family converted to Russian Orthodoxy. His mother began giving him piano lessons at five, and at the age of nine, she sent him to enroll at the Paris Conservatoire. In December 1840, Rubinstein played for an audience that included Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt. By 1852, he had become a leading figure in Saint Petersburg's musical life. Around 1850, Rubinstein had decided that he did not want to be known solely as a pianist, "but as a composer performing his symphonies, concertos, operas, trios, etc". Rubinstein was a prolific composer, writing no less than twenty operas, five piano concertos, six symphonies

and a large number of solo piano works along with a substantial output of works for chamber ensemble, two concertos for cello and one for violin, free-standing orchestral works and tone poems. Following Rubinstein's death, his works began to be ignored, but his principal works have retained a toehold in the Russian concert repertoire. Anton Rubinstein's best known composition - at least for young pianists – is his Melody in F.

Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900), although a very accomplished composer, is far less known than his Czech compatriots Antonín Dvořák or Bedřich Smetana. This can be explained by the fact that Fibich lived during the rise of Czech nationalism within the Habsburg empire. Home schooled by his mother, an ethnic German Viennese until the age of 9, he was first sent to a German speaking gymnasium in Vienna for 2 years before attending a Czech speaking gymnasium in Prague where he stayed until he was 15. Hence Fibich, in contrast to either Dvořák or Smetana, was the product of two cultures, German and Czech. In his instrumental works, Fibich generally wrote in the vein of the German romantics, and his early operas as well as close to 200 of his early songs are in German. Fibich's substantial output of classical music includes chamber works (two string quartets, a piano trio, piano quartet and a quintet for piano, strings and winds), symphonic poems, three symphonies, at least seven operas, melodramas, liturgical music including a mass, and a large cycle (almost 400 pieces, from the 1890s) of piano works called *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences.* His best-known work, Poème (Opus 41 No. 4) was drawn from one of a series of these piano sketches. The piece has become a part of the symphonic suite "At twilight" (V podvečer) published in 1893 and subsequently transcribed for innumerable instrument combinations.

Moritz Moszkowski (1854 –1925) was a Polish-German-Jewish pianist and composer known for his salon pieces, but he also wrote concerti and chamber music and was a talented violinist. He has been greatly underrated and described as a 'salon' composer. A composer of excellent 'salon' music he may have been but he also wrote many very demanding pieces which are now established in the repertoire. His transcription for piano of 'Isolde's Tod' is considered superior to that of Liszt's. His Piano Concerto in E is one of the best of the Romantic period concertos and has been recorded by many artists. He died nearly forgotten.

Arthur Jacob Arshawsky (1910–2004), better known as Artie Shaw, was an American jazz clarinetist, composer, and bandleader. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest jazz clarinetists of his time. A self-proclaimed "very difficult man," Shaw was married eight times. He began learning the saxophone when he was 13 years old, and by the age of 16, he switched to the clarinet and left home to tour with a band. In New York, he became session musician through the early 1930s, performing with many bands and orchestras. Shaw first gained critical acclaim with his "Interlude in B-flat" at a swing concert at the Imperial Theater in New York in 1935. During the swing era, Shaw's big band was popular with hits like "Begin the Beguine" (1938), "Stardust" or "Moonglow". In 1991, Artie Shaw's band library and manuscript collection was donated to the University of Arizona. In 2004, he was presented with a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
Three pieces for saxophone and piano, transcribed from the original piano pieces by an unknown author.
Le Petite negre (A Little African), L.114, composed as a solo piano piece in 1909
The girl with the flaxen hair, L. 123, composed in 1912 as a part of the First book of Preludes for solo piano in 1912
Danse Bohemienne (A gypsy dance), L. 9, composed in 1880 as a solo piano piece

Achille-Claude Debussy (1862–1918), along with Maurice Ravel one of the most important impressionist music composers, was a central figure in European music at the turn of the twentieth century. His works often reflected the activities or turbulence in his own life. In 1872, at the age of ten, Debussy entered the Paris Conservatory, where he spent eleven years. From the start, though clearly talented, Debussy was argumentative and experimental, and he challenged the rigid teaching of the Academy. From 1880 to 1882, he lived in Russia. In September 1880 the patroness of Tchaikovsky, Nadezda von Meck, sent Debussy's *Danse bohémienne* for Tchaikovsky's perusal. A month later Tchaikovsky wrote "It is a very pretty piece, but it is much too short. Not a single idea is expressed fully, the form is terribly shriveled, and it lacks unity". Debussy did not publish the piece; the manuscript remained in the von Meck family, and was published only in 1932. Debussy's private life was often turbulent. On his permanent return to Paris in 1889, he began a tempestuous nine-year relationship , had an affair with a singer to whom he was briefly engaged. but finally married her friend Rosalie ('Lily') Texier. In 1904 he left her for a wife of a Parisian banker and the mother of one of his students. The scandal obliged Debussy and Bardac (already carrying his child) to flee to England, where he completed his symphonic suite La Mer. The couple were eventually married in 1908, their troubled union enduring until Debussy's death in 1918. Claude Debussy died of rectal cancer in Paris, in the midst of the World War I bombardment of the city, just eight months before France would celebrate victory. French culture has ever since considered Debussy as one of its most distinguished representatives. As Debussy did not use opus numbers for his pieces, his composinions were organized by the catalogue created by musicologist François Lesure in 1977 (thus his pieces being denoted the "L" numbers).

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) is probably the best known Spanish composer of "classical music". He studied music in Madrid, where in 1899, by unanimous vote, he was awarded the first prize at the piano competition at his school of music. De Falla spent the years 1907 to 1914 in Paris, where he met a number of composers who had an influence on his style, including the impressionists Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy and Paul Dukas. Among his best known pieces are the ballets *El amor brujo* (*Love the Magician*, 1915) which includes the much excerpted and arranged *Ritual Fire Dance*, and *El sombrero de tres picos* (*The Three-Cornered Hat*, 1917) which was produced by Serge Diaghilev with set design and costumes by Pablo Picasso. Following Francisco Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War, de Falla left Spain for Argentina. He died in Alta Gracia, in the Argentine province of Córdoba. In 1947 his remains were brought back to Spain and entombed in the cathedral at Cádiz.

Ronald Binge (1910–1979) was one of the most respected and successful English composer and arrangers of light music of his generation. After a stint as a composer, arranger and organist in a local silent cinema that had a small orchestra, he left for London establishing a productive association with Mantovani. From 1935, Binge did many of the Mantovani orchestra's arrangements, as well as writing much music of his own, some of which was recorded and broadcast. One of his most popular pieces, the Elizabethan Serenade, was composed for Mantovani in 1952. Many of his compositions for light orchestra were novelty items like "The Daybreak", which featured four saxophones as well as the usual orchestra; several sets of variations on The Carnival of Venice; and his Concerto for Alto Saxophone in E-flat major (1956), which has a gorgeously warm Romance as its slow movement.

Jaroslav Ježek (1906 –1942) was born in the Prague quarter of Žižkov. He studied composition at the Prague Conservatory as a pupil of Karel Jirák, at the master school of composition with Josef Suk, and shortly also with Alois Hába. Ježek met the playwrights/comedians Jan Werich and Jiří Voskovec (aka George Voskovec) in Prague, and took up the post of main composer and conductor for the theatre. During the next decade (from 1928 to 1939), he composed incidental music, songs, dances, and ballets for the comic and satirical plays of Voskovec and Werich. In 1934 he became a member of Czech Group of Surrealists. Forced to leave Czechoslovakia following the Nazi occupation, Ježek, Voskovec and Werich went into exile in New York City. In 1942, the long-ill Ježek died of chronic kidney disease in New York. His chamber, piano and concertante compositions were created first under the influence of Stravinsky and Arnold Schönberg. Later he found his own, specific and modern expression. He also became fascinated by American jazz and his innovative melodies are well-known in the Czech Republic to this day. Between 1929 and 1936 he organized and conducted an orchestra featuring his original jazz compositions and arrangements. Billed variously as "Ježek's Jazz" and "Ježkův swingband" they recorded for the Czech Ultraphon label, making some of the most original music in Europe. One of the most famous compositions of this genre, the "Bugatti Step" (1930) is an up-tempo number for piano and jazz orchestra, enjoying enduring popularity as a hot jazz piano solo. The piece was a hommage to a Czech female car racer Eliška Junková, a hero of the Targa Florio race, where she drove a Bugatti car.

Ennio Morricone (b. 1928) is an Italian Academy Award-winning composer. He has composed and arranged scores for more than 500 film and television productions. He was educated at the National Academy of Santa Cecilia in the trumpet, composition, choral music and choral direction. During his hugely successful career as a film music composer Ennio Morricone has won five Anthony Asquith Awards for Film Music by BAFTA in 1979–1992, and has been nominated for five Academy Awards for Best Music, Original Score in 1979–2001, winning none of them. Morricone received the Honorary Academy Award in 2007 "for his magnificent and multifaceted contributions to the art of film music". *Once Upon a Time in the West* is a 1968 epic Western film staring Henry Fonda, Jason Robards and Claudia Cardinale. Ennio Morricone provided the film score. In Europe, the film was a substantial box office success, while in the United States it was a financial flop. The film is now generally acknowledged as a masterpiece and one of the best western films ever made.

(Text prepared by P. Jelen using *verbatim* citations
from Wikipedia and other publicly available web sources)

Felix Slováček, graduate from Kroměříž Conservatoire and the Janáček Academy of Music in Brno, is one of the top clarinet and saxophone players on the Czech musical scene. His permanent repertoire includes works of classical music as well as jazz and pop. As solo player he has won many awards at international competitions. He also demonstrates his musical versatility as composer, and since 1983 as chief conductor the Felix Slováček Big Band.

Felix Slováček has been a member of many orchestras like the Karel Vlach Orchestra, and performed with numerous others (Gustav Brom's Big Band, the RIAS Radio Big Band, Radio Copenhagen Big Band, WDT Big Band Koln and others). He also appeared regularly on the programs of singer Karel Gott, that long-time star of Czech pop music. As classical music interpreter, Felix Slováček has played with many well-known music ensembles in the Czech Republic and abroad - for example with the European Community Chamber Orchestra, the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, the Dresden Philharmonic, Hessen Radio Symphony Orchestra etc.

Felix Slováček has made over 500 recordings, with nearly 2 million sound media sold.

Boris Krajny is one of the Czech most successful pianists of the present time. He has toured in 35 countries on five continents and played in the most famous concert halls such as New York (Carnegie Hall 1972, 1977, 1983), Washington (Kennedy Center 1977, 1983), the Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, London's Wigmore Hall, Gaveau Hall in Paris, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, in the temple of Venus Baalbeck, the Sydney Opera House, Melbourne, Tokyo, Brussels, Berlin, Athens, Toronto, Edmonton, Havana, Cairo, Bogota, Caracas, Johannesburg, Mexico-City, Verona, Madrid, Salzburg, Vienna, etc.

Mr Krajny was born in 1945 in Kromeriz, where he studied at the conservatory. Later he studied and graduated at the Prague Academy with prof. Maxian and Ivan Moravec. Since 1982, as a soloist with the Prague Chamber Orchestra, he made many trips to South America, USA, Canada, Japan and Australia.

In 1993, Dvořák's Piano Concerto was premiered on a monthly tour in South Africa, while the French festival in Rouen in 1996 heard the complete piano and chamber works by L. Janacek. At the Prague Spring in 1990 Boris premiered the Czechoslovak Age of Anxiety by L Bernstein.

His discography includes several concertos with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Dvořák's piano quintet, works by C Franck, JS Bach choral preludes in the organization of F Busoni, Voříšek's brilliant variations and rondo with the Prague Chamber Orchestra, compositions by L van Beethoven, F Chopin, C Debussy, E Schullhof, B Martinu and others. For recordings of French piano concertos with the Prague Chamber Orchestra (Honegger, Poulenc, Roussel) he received the Grand Prix 1982 in Paris. For the Supraphon label he recorded the complete works of M Ravel.

In the season 1999 - 2000 he performed the piano Concerto No. 4 of B Martinů in New York with New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and the Malaysian Philharmony in Kuala Lumpur.

Presently he is an associate professor at the Academy of Musical Arts (AMU) in Prague.

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